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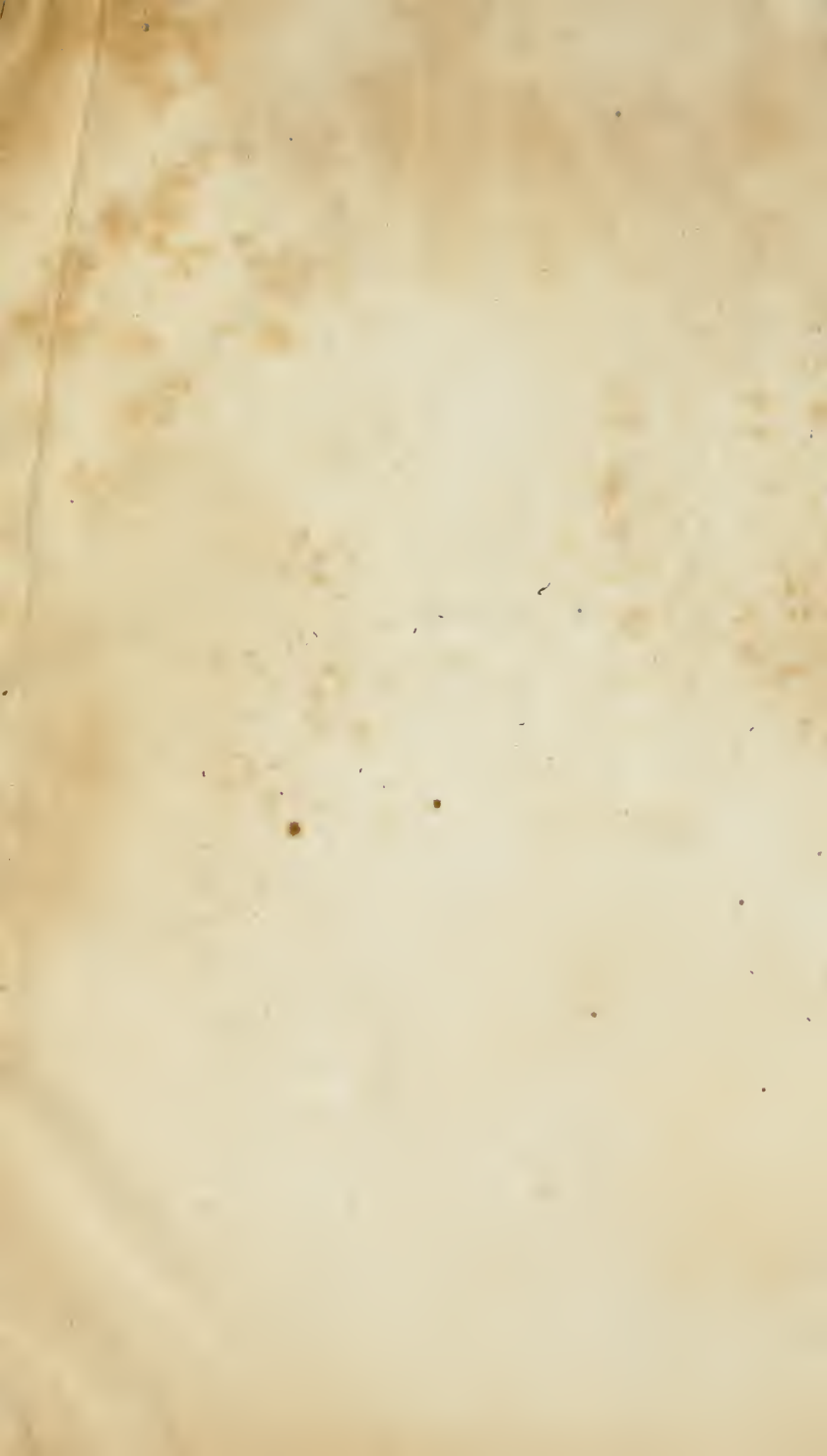
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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.









AN

# HALF CENTURY S E R M O N,

DELIVERED AT

*ASHBURNHAM,*

Nov. 3, 1818.

BY JOHN CUSHING, A. M.

PASTOR OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH IN SAID TOWN.

I will meditate also of all thy work, and talk of thy doings.

Thou art the God that doest wonders.

PSAL. lxxvii. 12, 14.

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*December, 1818.*



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*Ashburnham, Nov. 30, 1818.*

REV. MR. CUSHING,

THE undersigned are a committee, chosen by the subscribers for your Half Century Sermon, to solicit a copy of the same for publication.

Very respectfully yours,

SHERH. HUNT,  
ABR. THOMPSON LOWE,  
I. JEWETT.



*Ashburnham, Nov. 30, 1818.*

GENTLEMEN,

IT is with diffidence I submit to your request. Believing it will be gratifying to numbers to know the beginning and progress of the Town, and to review the wonderful works of God which have been wrought in the United States and the world, in the past fifty years, I submit the Discourse to the world, presuming every candid person will be disposed to make proper allowances for an old man, whose intentions he thinks are good.

I am, Gentlemen, yours respectfully,

JOHN CUSHING.

DEACON SHEREBIAH HUNT,	}	<i>Committee.</i>
DR. ABR. THOMPSON LOW,		
COL. IVERS JEWETT,		



AN

## Half Century Sermon.\*

PSALM cxlv. 4.

*One generation shall praise thy works unto another,  
and shall declare thy mighty acts.*

**CURIOSITY** is very natural to man. How full of questions generally are children! They are not born with knowledge, and how shall they obtain it, but by asking questions, till they can read, and get information for themselves? And their questions ought not to be disregarded; but they should be instructed as their capacities enlarge.

Curiosity excites in us a desire to know what is doing in the world: hence it is that such great numbers of newspapers and histories are published.

Curiosity also leads us to know the history of our ancestors. How carefully is every fragment preserved which tends to throw light upon their manners, customs, sufferings, prosperity, and the progress they made in subduing a wilderness. An Historical Society has been formed in this Commonwealth for collecting and publishing every thing which related to the settlement of New-England; and a number of volumes have been already published, that one generation might declare to another the mighty acts of the Lord.

\* This Sermon would have been delivered on the 2d day, had it not been it was the day of meeting to choose a Representative to Congress.

Upon taking a retrospective view of God's dealings with our fathers, it is difficult to know where to begin and where to end. To give an account of their persecutions, their perils, their sufferings and hardships—of their wars with the natives—of their fortitude and perseverance—of their religious transactions—of their attempts at purity in worship, and to establish a scriptural mode of discipline—and of their mistakes, and of the persecutions of those who dissented from them, would fill volumes; and many volumes have been written.

There is generally a veneration for ancestors. They are extolled, and their virtues rated higher than those of their descendants; for it has been common in every age to lament the degeneracy of the present generation. If we confine our views to New-England, there is probably reason or ground for the complaint; for the first settlers were generally a very pious people. It was purely for conscience' sake that they left the comforts and sweets of their native land, and came to this howling wilderness, where their sufferings were greater than we can well conceive. But in some of the other States, I do not suppose that there is reason to complain of degeneracy; because the first settlers were many of them the dregs of the people. But the fathers of New-England were not perfect. They brought with them an intolerant spirit; and although they fled from persecution, they were guilty of persecuting dissenters from them; and the punishments, in some cases, extended to banishment, and if they returned, to death; and a number did actually suffer death.

I wish an impenetrable veil could have been drawn over their transactions, so that they never should have reached posterity. But faithful history has handed them down to this day. And they have their use. The present generation may be led to

feel more their obligations to God for the liberty of conscience that every one enjoys. Now, one's religious opinions or sentiments do not subject him to any disabilities or persecutions.

In extenuation of the doings of our ancestors, it may be observed, that toleration was not then understood. They pleaded, that here there was room enough, and if any would not conform to their creed, worship and discipline, they might go elsewhere; for they did not choose to be interrupted in the order of things which they had established.

But the founders of New-England ought to be had in grateful remembrance by every generation, for the foundations they laid for maintaining religion and liberty. It was a law, that every town should maintain a learned minister and a grammar school. Our fathers considered that religion and knowledge were the two pillars on which alone a free government could be supported. And their sentiments were perfectly just and right, as the experience of every age has demonstrated. By these means, the flame of liberty was kept burning—the love of it warmed every breast. They fled their native land for the sake of it. They were resolved not to be in bondage. The spirit of liberty was invincible; for their descendants, rather than submit to the British acts of parliament, who claimed a right to make laws to bind the colonies in all cases whatever, made resistance to their arbitrary and unconstitutional edicts. War ensued—and as soon as blood was shed, the *then* colonies made common cause, and, by the blessing of God, they maintained their liberties and independence; and the present generation are enjoying the blessings which were purchased by the blood, the treasure and sufferings of their fathers.

But had it not been for the spirit of liberty which pervaded New-England, especially Massachusetts,

the war of the revolution would not have been supported.—But I am not going to give an history of the struggle and war, which terminated in the establishment of our liberties and independence.

“One generation shall praise thy works unto another, and shall declare thy mighty acts.”

God, knowing the propensity or desire that there is in man to be acquainted with past events, has made provision that *that* desire should be gratified.

Moses has given a clear but concise account of the creation—of the world—of man—of his fall—and of the universal corruption of mankind. He was commissioned to be the deliverer of Israel from Egypt, and their lawgiver. And after he had effected their deliverance, and led them through the wilderness for the space of forty years, and had brought them to the borders of Canaan, he recapitulated unto them the dealings of God towards them unto their fathers. He set himself to rehearse to the people the wonderful works of God; reminded them of the murmurings and rebellions of their fathers, notwithstanding all the wonders God did for them that they might trust in him.

They were frequently reminded of God's care and loving kindness, that they might retain a grateful remembrance of his mercies.

The seventy-eighth Psalm is a very striking instance to the purpose. “Give ear, O my people, to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old; which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from our children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done. For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers that they should make them known to their children; that



the generation to come might set their hope in God, and not forget his works, but keep his commandments," &c.—and goes on and gives an historical account of the great things God did for their ancestors, in dividing the sea for them, and giving them the pillar of the cloud for a shade by day, and for a light by night. The design of thus rehearsing the dealings of God towards their fathers was, that they might set their hope in God, and not forget his works. You see it was enjoined as a duty to tell their children what God had done, and they were to tell the same to their children.

Hence we see the propriety of such historical discourses at certain periods. Forty years was a remarkable period of old ; for so long God bore the manners of his people ; so long he kept them in the wilderness, as a punishment for their murmurings and rebellions, until all that generation, from twenty years old and upward, were consumed, excepting Caleb and Joshua.

Fifty years is also a period to be noticed ; for every fifty years was a jubilee. Every seventh year was a sabbatical year, when the Israelites were neither to sow nor reap.

God caused the earth, every sixth year, to produce a triple crop. When seven sabbatical years were finished, there was a jubilee, a year of rejoicing ; for then every one was restored to freedom who was in servitude for debts, and all debts were relinquished, and every one was restored to his possession. These laws were peculiar to God's covenant people, and were designed to preserve liberty and equality. For no one could add field to field, and become overgrown with riches. And undoubtedly it was typical of the great jubilee by Jesus Christ, who came to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. All who embrace him are made free ; for if the Son shall make you free, ye shall be

free indeed. All who submit to him, have their debts, their sins forgiven them, and they may rejoice. Christ repeatedly said to them whom he healed, "Be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee." And no joy can equal *that* which *they* have who have good evidence that their sins are forgiven. It is greater than the joy of harvest.

By what has been said, you may perceive that I have been preparing the way (perhaps I have been too long) to discourse of events that have occurred in Providence in the fifty years which were yesterday completed since my ordination over the people of this town.

I have felt it a duty to take a particular notice of the time, especially when I consider how few in the ministry are spared so long.

Surely I have much reason gratefully to acknowledge the goodness of God, that he has spared my life, when almost all my brethren who were cotemporary with me have ceased from their labours, and are silent in the grave. In a field of grain that is reaped, there is here and there a stalk left standing : so, here and there an aged minister is left, while the rest are cut down.

Although I am sensible of the decay of the powers of both body and mind, (and I suppose you too are sensible of it,) I enjoy health, and am able to go through the publick exercises with as little fatigue as ever ; and I take more particular notice of it, because it was not expected, in my long sickness and weakness, that I should ever be what I am.\* God had more service for me to do ; so he spared my life, and raised me up from the gates of death to declare his works. And I hope it has not been in vain that my life has been prolonged. What further service he has for me to perform, is known only to him. But I view

\* The author was laid by from preaching 26 sabbaths. His sickness began in October, 1809.

myself as near to the eternal world, and I desire to speak as one on the borders of eternity.

“One generation shall praise thy works unto another, and shall declare thy mighty acts.”

At my ordination, there were fifty-eight families in the town; and I think they did not average more than five to a family; and if so, there were but 290. Now, I suppose there are more than 1100. Since my settlement, the town of Gardner has been formed. About 4000 acres were taken from *this*. The meeting-house stands on what was the southwest corner lot of this town. And a number of families, with their lands, have been annexed to Ashby.

This town was originally granted to the heirs of those in Dorchester who perished in an unsuccessful expedition against Canada, and was called Dorchester Canada, until its incorporation by its present name, which act passed Feb. 22, 1765. The grant of the township, to be equal to six miles square, was made in 1735.

To the original grant, four farms were annexed: Lexington Farm, Cambridge Farm, each of 1000 acres, Rolf's Farm, of 7 or 800 acres, and another of 1000; which were located west of Lunenburg and Townsend, and north of Westminster, before this town was granted, which made it very large. Perhaps a third part of the town of Ashby was taken from this in the year 1767.

In 1739, the proprietors, as they were obliged, erected a meeting-house, 50 by 40. It was the first frame that was set up in the town; and it has been considered, and was at the time, as an extraordinary enterprize, that it was raised by only sixteen men.—In this place it is proper to observe, that in the summer of 1766 a hurricane passed over this hill, and made a wreck of the meeting-house, and moved it to the north and to the east two or



three feet. It was thought at first that it could not be repaired; but it was, and stood until 1791, until this house was completed, which was raised May 24, and dedicated Nov. 10 following, and at that time was thought to be equal for elegance to any in this region. But to return.

Settlers came on the year the first house was raised, and made a beginning; but quitted the ground in consequence of a war which broke out that year, which exposed them to the Indians. A Mr. Fitch, of Lunenburg, now Ashby, was captivated and carried to Canada; and on their way they stopped at the meeting-house, the roof of which was covered; but they did no damage to it. I believe none returned to settle till that war ended, which was in 1748. Before the war of 1755 broke out, settlements were made principally in that part of the town which was taken on to Ashby. Mr. Jeremy Foster lived here when he had no neighbour within six or seven miles. Some soldiers were stationed in these parts, to range the wilderness, and protect the scattered inhabitants. They had occasional preaching in this town, but no settled minister until April, 1760, when the Rev. Jonathan Winchester was ordained, and lived in peace, and was respected and beloved, until Nov. 26, 1767, when he died much lamented.

At his ordination, a church was gathered, consisting of 13 male members including himself. During his ministry 29 were admitted, partly new members, and partly from other churches.

At my ordination there were 19 male members, and 230 have since been added; so that all who have been admitted to this church, including those in the foundation of it, amount to 272; and if there were as many female as male members in the formation of the church, the whole number will be 284. 926 have been baptized, and 19 adults, since my ordi-

nation. But many who have been born here have not been baptized. I cannot ascertain the number of births in 50 years, but I think they cannot fall short of 1200.

The number that now belongs to this church is 123—36 males and 87 females. I wish you to observe the numbers; 36 males and 87 females; more than two to one. Why is it so? I wish the males to take this matter into serious consideration.

The two first deacons were Moses Foster and Samuel Fellows, and they were in office at my settlement. Brother Tristram Cheney succeeded Deacon Foster, who was chosen Feb. 27, 1769. Brother John Willard succeeded Deacon Fellows upon his removal out of town, and was chosen in 1772. Brother Samuel Wilder was chosen successor to Deacon Cheney, Feb. 1773. In 1788, Dec. 4th, Brothers Peter Stone and Jacob Harris were chosen. In August, 1798, Brothers Elisha White and Sherebiah Hunt were chosen successors of Deacon Wilder and Deacon Stone. Upon the death of Deacon White, Brother Samuel Ward was chosen, July 7, 1817.

The number of deaths in half a century has been 472, which upon an average is a fraction over nine in a year. There was not a grown person died while my predecessor was minister. An aged German died the summer after Mr. Winchester, but was not buried in this grave-yard. When I settled, there were but three graves of adults: one was Mr. Winchester's; one of a Mr. Haskell, from Lancaster, who, with two brothers, came to hunt, and was shot by them through mistake, when there was not an inhabitant in the town; the other was of an aged widow, who was accidentally drowned. Some years after my settlement, in digging a grave, the sexton came upon the foot of a coffin: there was no appearance of a grave. Who was buried there, has

never been discovered. In May, 1769, a Mr. Dwight died after a short illness, and then there was not a death of an adult for more than five years. In 1769, there were two deaths; in '70, only a premature infant; in '71, five, all infants; in '72, two; in '73, three infants; in '74, four, one adult. No mortal, sweeping sickness has prevailed at any time. The greatest mortality was in 1794, when the number of deaths was 20: that year the canker rash prevailed. The year this house was built, there were but six deaths. In the years '97 and 1802, there were but five deaths in each. Of the whole number 472, 60 lived to the age of 70 or more.

I have long thought that this is a remarkably healthy town. It is on the height of land, streams running from it both to Connecticut and Merrimack rivers. There are but few dead swamps to send forth pestiferous exhalations.

In attending my brother Lee's Half Century Sermon, one fortnight since, I found that in Royalston they had buried, in 50 years, 780; in one year, 80, and in another, over 50.

There have been but few deaths by accidents. A little child, many years ago, was burnt to death.—At the close of 1774, Samuel Stone perished in consequence of getting lost. He left his house on Wednesday morning. It was cloudy. A violent storm came on; and having lost the points of compass, he wandered that day and night, and was not found and brought home until Saturday night. He was a pitiful object: his feet were frozen as hard as flesh could be. He died Sabbath night in great anguish.—A few years since, a Mr. Shaw was found dead on the snow. Having lost his way, and no doubt greatly fatigued, he laid down and died.—And Mr. Constantine died in consequence of his horse's going off a high bridge in Ashby. His wife was with him in the sleigh: she was very much jar-

red, but in a little time recovered.—And Mr. Wilder, in his deranged state, fell through the ice in crossing a pond in Douglas or Dudley. He supported himself near an hour, and then sunk, his situation being such that no help could be afforded in season.

The number of marriages which I have solemnized is 287.

There is but one who was head of a family at my ordination, left in town.\* How many are living who removed from us, who were active in my settlement, I cannot ascertain : I know but of three or four ; so that a new generation is risen up. One generation passeth away, and another cometh.

The events which I have been detailing which have taken place among us, are as atoms when compared with what has taken place in the United States and in the world.

The opposition to the acts of the British parliament—the war that ensued—the struggles, the fatigues, the sufferings of the officers and soldiers in the war of the revolution—the anxieties and hardships of those at home, both men and women, cannot be fully conceived of by the present generation. It cost the States immense blood and treasure. How many lives in the whole were lost, I am not able to say. How many were lost from this town, I can tell. But one fell in battle ; but a number died in the army, or on their way home, or after they reached their homes, as many as nine.

But success attended. God was on our side. Though the first years were unpromising, the conclusion was equal to our most sanguine expectations. Our liberties were secured, our independence was acknowledged by Great-Britain, and by the other nations of Europe, one after another.

What people have been more highly favoured ! God raised up Washington to lead our armies to vic-

\* Mr. Enos Jones.



tory and independence ; and when the new Constitution was established, he was, by a unanimous vote of the people, placed twice at the head of the government, where he shone with as distinguished lustre as at the head of our armies. Where is the man in all profane history to be set in competition with him ? Americans delight in contemplating his character. In no period has any man been more admired and extolled. Almost unlimited confidence was placed in him, and he never abused it. What a gloom was spread over the nation when this distinguished person fell a victim to death ! What a triumph did the king of terrors obtain !

What period in the annals of time has been filled with more important events than the last fifty years ?

What people ever before had the liberty and opportunity deliberately to form constitutions of government, in which liberty is secured to every individual, and provision made for amendments, when time and experience shall point out their necessity ? Our governments, contrary to the predictions of our enemies, have become firm and as fixed as they were while we were in subjection to Great-Britain. In these United States great internal improvements have been made since the peace of 1783, in agriculture and manufactures, in roads, in buildings publick and private, in canals, bridges, &c. Is it not astonishing to contemplate what has been done in making roads ? Roads that, fifty years ago, or even thirty, were hardly passable on horseback, now may be passed with carriages, and with despatch. The number of great bridges is surprising. What would those who left the world forty or fifty years ago, think, were they to rise up and see what has been done ?

Go where you will in New-England, you may see elegant meeting and dwelling houses. A surprising change has also taken place respecting school-houses and in instruction.

To what a pitch have manufactures been carried ! Further, perhaps, than they would have been in two hundred years, if we had continued in subjection to Great-Britain. We should have been kept under governours who would have withheld their assent to every act for encouraging manufactures, lest it should injure Old England.

As to commerce, American ships now navigate every sea. In ship-building and in managing them, none in the world exceed Americans. As to ships of war, and fighting in them, the Americans, in the last war, frequently obtained the victory, indeed in almost every engagement ; and undoubtedly the British are the first in Europe.

The American revolution in a few years was followed by a mighty one in France. But their first constitution was of short duration. They did not appear to have had right conceptions of liberty and of a free government. The people were led by violent men ; they killed their King ; innocent blood flowed in torrents. One revolution followed another, until Buonaparte usurped the government, and the people submitted because they were wearied with such continual changes. They wished for a government upon which they could have dependence.

This Buonaparte waxed mighty in power. He was successful in his wars, until he became the terror of Europe ; and, excepting Great-Britain, he became the sovereign of it, and gave law to the nations ; and to what his power would grow, no man could tell. Spain at length dared to oppose his power. Also the Emperour of Russia, weary of being his vassal, made opposition ; in consequence of which, he was invaded by an army exceeding all of modern times. Buonaparte took possession of Moscow, the ancient capital, to which the Russians set fire, rather than it should afford him winter

quarters. Then followed, upon the retreat of the French, such a scene of distress to Buonaparte and his army as has no parallel in history. His mighty army was almost annihilated. But he was not disheartened. Intoxicated with power, and grasping at too much, he lost all. The next year, with an army nearly equal to the preceding, he set out for conquest and revenge; but was met by an army equal, or nearly so. He was defeated; he was pursued into France, and was dethroned, and the Bourbon family reinstated. He returned the next year from the island of Elba, which he had chosen for his residence, and with scarce any resistance seated himself again on the throne. But the allied powers moved in their might to dispossess him. At the dreadful battle of Waterloo, he was entirely defeated, and is now a prisoner on a far distant island, where he has time for reflection, and where, for the peace of Europe, it is hoped he will remain.

His rise was remarkable. He was raised up by the Almighty for a scourge to the nations; and when the purposes were answered for which he was clothed with such gigantick power, he was laid aside. History will hardly furnish an instance of such an astonishing reverse of fortune. This remarkable change furnishes every crowned head with a solemn admonition, and shows that thrones can be firmly established only by righteousness.

Within the period under consideration, the enemies of Christ and his religion have made unwearyed exertions to extirpate Christianity from the earth; and they had the vanity to believe that they should effect their purposes. That arch fiend Voltaire was at the head; but the miserable wretch died in horrors. The Almighty saw fit to suffer them to proceed to great lengths. Some crowned heads were among the infidels. "Kings set themselves and rulers took counsel together against the



Lord and against his anointed; saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens laughed at them; the Lord had them in derision. When the enemy were coming in like a flood, the spirit of the Lord has lifted a standard against them." This scripture has been remarkably verified. Able writers have appeared in the cause of Christ, whose arguments have not been answered, nor can be. In the midst of war, the British and Foreign Bible Society was formed. It originated with a few men who were concerned to promote the glory of God by disseminating the Holy Scriptures. They proceeded. The Society wonderfully increased. Now most of the royal family and nobility are members. Auxiliary Societies have been formed in every part of Great-Britain. The Society have distributed vast numbers of Bibles and Testaments gratis, or at cost, or reduced prices. Bible Societies, since the formation of the British, which was in 1804, have been formed in every Christian protestant nation. And it is found that Bibles are sought after with great avidity. Instead of the Bible's being rooted out of the world, and Christianity along with it, as the infidel conspirators intended and expected, it has become more extensively circulated, more generally read, and more loved and regarded, than at any former period. This is the Lord's doings. The counsel of the froward is carried headlong. "One generation shall praise thy works unto another, and declare thy mighty acts." These are the mighty acts of Jehovah. But I have not said all. A missionary spirit has pervaded all Christendom. Missionary Societies have been formed in the Christian world for bringing the heathen to the knowledge of God and of his Son Jesus Christ. Nothing has been done, since the Reformation, for propagating the gospel, equal to what is now doing

and has been done within these twenty years. There are at least seven Missionary Societies in this Commonwealth, formed more especially for supplying the new plantations. And there is a Society for Foreign Missions among the Heathen; and they have now thirteen missionaries among them, and more are going. And the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions have four missionaries in the East-Indies. There are, I believe, in every State both Bible and Missionary Societies. Also there is a National Bible Society.

So many objects present themselves to the mind, that it is difficult to know what to select.

Times are changed, and men are changed with them; and I think for the better. For now, instead of crowned heads' being confederate with infidels, they have entered into an holy league to govern their subjects according to the rules of the gospel; and they are become nursing fathers, and queens are nursing mothers, to the church, as predicted. From present appearances, the latter day glory is fast approaching; and the devout, benevolent Christian enjoys much pleasure by anticipating the felicity of that day.

Though infidelity, vice and error have prevailed, I believe there is more real religion at this day than twenty or thirty years ago.

There have been revivals of religion in many places, and some of them very extensive and remarkable; and they have not been attended with extravagance and wild enthusiasm, with some exceptions. I sincerely wish a more extensive revival had taken place among us.

A few years ago, religion was at a very low ebb. The gates of Zion mourned because so few came up to her solemn feasts. For fifteen years, reckoning from 1801, inclusive, there were but 42 new members admitted. But I have been encouraged

by what has taken place this year and the two preceding; for there have been 47 admitted—more, you see, than in fifteen years before.

In the six first years after my ordination, 80 joined to the church; so that the greater part of the married people were professors; and surely it was encouraging. And it is encouraging now, in the evening of my life, to see so many coming forward and joining themselves to the Lord in covenant. Oh that its number might increase, and that every careless, thoughtless sinner might be aroused, and be in earnest in inquiring the way to Zion. And may all who have named the name of Christ walk worthy of the Lord unto all well pleasing!

How much good I have done I know not, and perhaps it will not be known until the day of judgment. The thought that I had done no good in fifty years would be insupportable. But I have good reason to believe that I have not laboured wholly in vain.

I know I have come short; I have not improved many opportunities of doing good which I might. But I must say, that I have endeavoured to preach the truths of the gospel as far and as well as I knew them. It has been my aim and resolution to keep back nothing that was profitable, testifying repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, as the only way to obtain pardon and peace here, and happiness hereafter.

Peace and harmony have generally prevailed amongst us, notwithstanding there is a difference of sentiments both in religion and politicks.

There has generally been manifested a disposition that each should enjoy liberty of conscience. I have uniformly endeavoured to exercise charity towards dissenters, and to avoid asperity and censoriousness. And the reflection that I have thus endeavoured, affords satisfaction. In exercising the

discipline of Christ's kingdom, I have aimed to avoid severity. I have often thought of an observation of the bishop of St. Asaph as worthy of regard—"The art of government consists in not governing too much."

I am sensible I need the continuance of your candour. Allowances ought to be made for the defects and infirmities of old age. You must not expect too much from an old man. It is my wish and prayer that I may be useful while I live. O that every sinner might be brought to repentance! There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth. If I should be so happy as to obtain heaven at last, what joyful tidings shall I carry to those who have gone thither from among us, if I should be able to tell them that many were submitting to the Lord Jesus, and were not ashamed of professing him before men! And what joy would it be to all here who love him, and are praying fervently for the advancement of his kingdom, by the increase of converts, and by the holy and exemplary lives of professors. Let me exhort all who have named the name of Christ, to have their conversation as becometh the gospel. Let me exhort heads of families to walk before their houses with upright hearts. Train up your children in the way they should go; bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Pray with and for them.

Let me address a few words to the aged.

We have grown old together, and we shall not be long divided in death. We have seen days of sorrow and trouble. Our warfare is almost accomplished. We have yet to encounter with the war of death. Let me ask, have we fought the good fight, the fight of faith? If we have, there is laid up for us a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give us at the day of retribution. Upon taking a retrospective view



of our lives, we can see many things for which we have reason to be ashamed and humbled before God. If any of us are now without a hope well grounded, surely it is high time to awake out of sleep. If any of us have neglected the great salvation to old age, we are in danger of being cast off forever.

To the young people I would say, seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. This is the command of the Lord Jesus; and dare you disregard it? Oh be wise, and consider your latter end. Know ye the God of your fathers, and serve him. If you seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will cast you off forever.

I would speak a few words to the youth.

At catechisings, and when visiting the schools, you know I have given you counsels, instructions and warnings. How much you have regarded, I know not. Numbers of you, no doubt, have made light of what I have said. It is probable some of you think that you will be religious when you are old. Delays are dangerous. You may be assured that not more than one quarter of you will live to be as old as I now am. I may never have opportunity of speaking to you again. "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." Do not forget that I thus called upon you after I had been preaching half a hundred years. If my life is spared, you may expect yet to hear counsels and instructions; and oh that you may regard them! that you do not mourn at the last, when thy flesh and thy body are consuming, when all mourning and lamentation will be unavailing.

It is customary for ministers who have lived to deliver half century sermons, to give their people some advice respecting their proceedings about a successor.

When I take a view of the present situation of this town, I feel myself under an embarrassment what to say. I have some unpleasant apprehensions as to what may take place after I have finished my course; and I am not alone in my apprehensions. It is well known that there is a difference of religious sentiments; and if there should be still further separations, it may be that this society shall think that they shall not have ability to settle another minister to give the salary of the present day.

When I am sleeping in my tomb, you may get into divisions and contentions, and live many years without a minister. But I will not indulge myself in too gloomy apprehensions. Things often take a turn much more favourable than was apprehended. Jesus is King and Head of the church; the hearts of all are in his hands, and he can turn them as he pleases. If you should be so happy as to obtain a candidate of pleasing manners, of good abilities and acquirements, one who appears to be a man of real piety, and who preaches Christ and him crucified, you may continue united. A people will do what they have a mind to. What is *thought* to be a burden, will be one.

Let me entreat you to avoid contentions and divisions; for where there is strife and contention, there is confusion and every evil work. Union will be your strength. Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! You have had opportunity to observe the evils of contention in other towns adjoining. Study the things that make for peace, and things which may edify one another. When contention gets to be sharp, social intercourse is interrupted, and sometimes families are divided, the father against the son, and the son against the father, and brother against brother. Such a state is greatly to be dep-

recated. Let all who love the Lord Jesus Christ and his religion, be fervent in prayer to the God of all grace for direction. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem. "They shall prosper that love thee." (Ps. cxxii.) And pray for your minister. He is hastening to the great tribunal. The time of my departure is at hand. It is a consolation that the blood of Jesus was shed for the priesthood as well as for the people. Through that blood I hope for redemption, even the forgiveness of sins. His blood cleanseth from all sin. If I am finally saved, I now declare my firm belief that it will not be by works of righteousness that I have done or can do, but according to the mercy of God, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost.—I will no longer trespass upon your patience.

My brethren and friends, I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them who are sanctified.—AMEN.

















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